

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY DIRECTS ASSISTANCE TO STORM RAVAGED AREAS
Urges Continued Caution As Communities Start Clean-up Efforts

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today directed assistance to storm ravaged areas of the state following the deadly winds and torrential rains that moved through North Carolina late Wednesday and today. The Governor has activated the State Emergency Response Team and dispatched emergency crews to assist affected counties as severe storms moved across the state. He urged citizens to continue to be cautious around downed trees, power lines, swift moving water and other damage left in the storm's wake.

"This devastating storm has resulted in loss of life and injuries in several communities," said Easley. "We have mobilized to make sure these cities and towns can fully respond to critical needs, that any disrupted basic services are rapidly restored and people can start recovery efforts as soon as possible."

It appears the storm's worst damage struck the town of Rieglewood in Columbus County where there are reports of several deaths, scores of injuries and dozens of homes destroyed early this morning when a tornado touched down about 20 miles west of the coastal city of Wilmington. The county declared a state of emergency this morning.

A shelter opened early today at the Acme Delco Elementary School in Riegelwood with 30 families showing up. Additional Highway Patrol troopers have been sent to Columbus County to assist local law enforcement in the affected areas. State Department of Transportation crews have been on the scene since this morning working to clear debris off of roadways.

There have also been damage reports from Iredell, Lincoln and Rowan counties in the western part of the state. Scattered power outages have been reported along with downed trees that have blocked highways and local roads. The heavy rains have resulted in localized flooding of some smaller creeks and streams in low-lying areas in eastern counties.

In the coming hours, as local officials are able to assess the situation in their areas, damage assessment teams will be dispatched as requested by county officials. Information from these assessment teams will be used to determine what steps will be taken on a state level and whether there is a need to request a federal disaster declaration.

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